

The Examiner has maintained the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejections of claims 1-12 as being unpatentable over Yamamuro et al. (Yamamuro) in view of Okabayashi et al. (Okabayashi).

As explained in Applicants' March 29, 1999 Amendment, Yamamuro and Okabayashi fail to teach or suggest several features of the claimed invention. One such feature is:

an insulator layer having windows, wherein the insulator layer is formed on a portion of the upper electrodes; and
a conductor pattern connecting with the upper electrodes
through the windows of the insulator layer (independent base claims 1 and 7, emphasis added).

The Examiner acknowledges that Yamamuro does not disclose an insulator layer having a window and relies on Okabayashi to supply this deficiency. In particular, referring to Okabayashi's Fig. 1, the Examiner alleges that Okabayashi discloses an insulator layer 11 having an insulating window 9c. Applicants respectfully submit that this analysis is in error, because 9c is not a window in the insulating layer 11. In fact, Okabayashi discloses that:

[s]hown at 9c in FIG. 3 is **an insulating gap** between the electrodes 9a and 9b" (col. 1, lines 39-40, emphasis added).

This insulating gap is necessary to separate electrodes 9a and 9b so that:

[w]hen an electric voltage is applied between the electrodes 9a and 9b, the piezoelectric material 8 is contracted such that the nozzle tube 5 reduces its diameter whereby ink is injected from the jet nozzle (col. 1, lines 41-45).

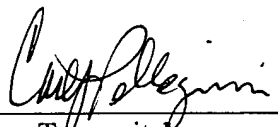
Therefore, contrary to the Examiner's analysis, Okabayashi does not disclose, or even suggest, an insulating layer having a window, but rather teaches an insulating layer 11 which extends into a gap 9c between the electrodes 9a and 9b. In other words, part of the insulating material which forms insulator layer 11 is disposed in the gap 9c.

Accordingly, Applicants' independent base claims 1 and 7, as well as their respective dependent claims 2-6 and 8-12 (which incorporate, by reference, all the novel and unobvious features of their base claims) would not have been obvious from the prior art at least for the reasons noted above.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such action is hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,

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